

Africa. Comp. of Royal Adventurers &  
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THE  
CASE  
OF THE  
CREDITORS  
OF THE

Royal *African* Company of *England*.

**T**HE Creditors acknowledge themselves obliged to the Company, for at last condescending to treat them, as not wholly unworthy of their Regard; tho' they have but too much Reason to wish, that this *Tenderness* had been more *seasonably* exerted, in preventing those Calamities, which the Company now own themselves so little able to relieve.

THEY desire however, to separate their Case from the Company's (with which it has been industriously blended) and to be heard in their own Behalf, as they conceive themselves to stand in a more advantageous Light, and to be entitled to a *Priority* of Relief, whether it be applied for as a Matter of Justice, or Compassion.

If the Company claim a *Right* to the Assistance of the *Publick*, from *Services* of which the *Publick* is supposed to have reaped the *Benefit*, it ought to be remembered, that those *Services* have been partly executed at the Creditors Expence; or if they ground such *Right* upon their *Property* in *Africa*, the Creditors ought to be considered as *Mortgagees* of that *Property*, and as such, to have the Produce applied, in the first Place, towards Satisfaction of their Demands.

In Point of *Compassion* likewise, the Creditors have Reason to expect a *Preference*, as the Company's Losses, or Misfortunes ought least, and last of all, to affect those, who neither occasioned, nor could prevent them, and who, in Case of any good Success, would have been intitled to no Share of their Profit, or Advantage: A *Preference*! still more justly due to those, who from Time to Time, furnished the necessary Stores, and Provisions, by which the Company's Forts, and Settlements have been supported, and who appear therefore to have been greatly injured, by their Misapplication of the *Parliamentary* Aids, expressly granted to them for that very Purpose.

BUT should it be surmised, that the *Publick* have acquired a *Title* superior to that, both of the Company, and Creditors, either from what they have already contributed towards the Support of the said Forts, and Settlements, or from the *Necessity* there confessedly is, for their taking the whole future Expence of that Support upon themselves; or, lastly, by Means of some latent Forfeiture, supposed to have been incurred by the Company, it is submitted to the Candour, and Equity of *Parliament*, Whether they will now construe into a *Loan*, what they have once freely given, or how far they will judge it proper to avail themselves of the Company's present *Necessities*, or past Misconduct, to the Prejudice, at least, of innocent Creditors, who could not but look upon the Company's Continuance in Possession, as an Evidence, and Admission of their Right of *Property*, and who must therefore be presumed to have been thereby induced to give them a *Credit*, which they would not otherwise have done. A presumptive Evidence, 'tis true, but repeatedly confirmed by positive Resolutions of the Honourable House of Commons, by which those Possessions have been from Time, to Time, expressly declared to be the Company's Property.

If therefore the Creditors are (as they humbly conceive) entitled to Satisfaction out of the Produce, or Value of the said Forts, and Settlements, they hope it will not be thought Presumption in them, that they endeavour to prove this Value equivalent, at least, to their Demands.

WERE such Value to be estimated from the Importance of the *African Trade* to this Kingdom, the Creditors humbly apprehend, that without the Help of Calculation, the same



same would appear infinitely to exceed what the Company have alledged the Amount of their *Debts* to be : But as some *Objections* have, of late, been raised to the *Utility* of the said Forts, and Settlements, notwithstanding they have, by the *biggest* Authority, been declared *necessary*, it may not be improper to state, and examine what has been so objected.

AND, *First*, It is alledged, That the said *Forts* and *Settlements* ought to be considered, and valued as *Marks of Possession* only, because our Territorial Rights in *Africa* would be (as is pretended) *no less* effectually secured by any other *Marks* (tho' ever so slight, or untenable) by which they could be sufficiently distinguished, and ascertained.

BUT how little able mere *Marks of Possession*, without sufficient *Strength* to defend them, would be to maintain a National *Dominion* in so remote a Country, may be illustrated by the Fate of the *Portuguese* (who were once Masters of the greatest Part of the *Gold-Coast*, till dispossessed by the *Dutch*) by the Treatment we ourselves received from the *Swedes* in *Cromwell's* Time, and afterwards from the *Dutch*, in the Reign of King *Charles the II.* until we had rendered our *Marks of Possession* capable of *Resistance*, and (thereby only) *respectable* : And, *Lastly*, By the Attempt of the *French* to settle at *Annamaboo*, in 1739, notwithstanding the *Peace* then still subsisting between us, and our many indisputable *Marks of Possession*, such as, the Remains of an *English Fort*, the *Union Flag* hoisted on the King's House, and the *Quit-Rent* actually paid by our Company to the *Brassoo*, and *Corranteers* of *Fanteen*, for the Fort, and Roads of *Annamaboo*, *Aggab*, and *Annishan* ; which Attempt of the *French*, tho' happily defeated by the Accident of the *War* (by which they were prevented receiving the necessary Supplies from *Europe*) may now again be soon resumed, and, in all Probability, with Success, unless prevented by some speedy, and vigorous Efforts on the Part of *Great Britain*.

EXPERIENCE too has shewn, that we cannot, without *Forts*, or other *defensible* Settlements, hope, even among the *Natives*, to secure ourselves from *Enemies*, who sometimes, by strange, and sudden *Revolutions*, come upon us unawares ; more than once have the *Dawbnees*, a potent Inland Nation, pillaged, and destroyed our defenceless *Out-Factories* at *Whidah*, whilst our *Fort* there has protected, and secured all within its Walls, against several Thousands of these invading *Negroes* : Nor can we, from impotent, and defenceless *Marks of Possession*, expect to derive any *Influence* even amongst *Negroe Friends* (whose good Opinion it is so much our Interest to cultivate) as those Friends, during their frequent domestick Wars, or rather mutual Incursions, expect *Protection* for their Wives, Children, and Effects, from their *European* Neighbours, and therefore must always be supposed to reverence them, in Proportion to their *Power* ; and, in Fact, of all the Nations on the *Gold-Coast*, the *Dutch* are the most esteemed by the *Natives*, because reputed to *excell*, both in the Number, and Condition of their *Forts*.

*Lastly*, AMONG many other Advantages to Trade in general, there certainly arises this very great Convenience from *fixed*, and *defensible* Settlements at Land ; that here, both the *private*, and *Corporation* Traders, *Europeans*, as well as *Natives* (many of which come down from the remotest Inland Parts) are sure at all Times to find a safe, and ready *Market*, either for Sale, or Purchase, without the Hazard, or Expence of waiting for slow, and accidental Opportunities.

*Secondly*, It is alledged, That the Company's Forts, and Castles are *unnecessary*, because, great Part of our Trade is carried on to those Coasts of *Africa*, where we have no Settlements at all.

THE *Fact* contained in this Objection, is undoubtedly *true*, but does by no Means warrant the *Conclusion* ; for tho' it should be granted, that the Forts, and Settlements we have in some Parts of *Africa*, are of no use to the Trade we carry on to others, it will not follow, that they are of no Service, or Necessity to the Trade of those Places, where they exist.

BUT what is thus proposed to be granted for Argument-sake only, is so far from being *true*, in Fact, that our Right of Trade to those open, and unsettled Parts of *Africa*, is a Consequence of our Dominion, and Strength in others ; witness the *Confiscations* of our Ships, and Cargoes, and the *Imprisonment* of our Traders, first by the *Portuguese*, and afterwards by the *Dutch* (notwithstanding our *Naval Power*) until we had acquired, and established a sufficient Footing, and made ourselves respectable at Land.

NOR is the *Right* of Trade only, but the *Trade* itself of every *European* Nation indebted to its respective Settlements for many, and great *Advantages* ; for there the Trader, when disappointed on the open Coasts, either by the *Natives*, or by *European* Rivals, can depend upon being, in all Events, supplied with *Wood*, *Water*, and *Provisions* ; there he is sure to find a friendly Reception, and Relief, in case of *Shipwreck*, and to obtain Shelter, and Protection for himself, and Cargo, both from *Enemies*, and *Pirates* ; there, and only there, when by any Accident delayed of his Voyage, either to *Europe*, or *America*, he may securely house his Goods, and by landing his *Negroes*, save them from the Ravage of that Sea-Pestilence, the *Scurvy*, so particularly fatal to the *Blacks*.

UPON this Principle, no doubt it is, that other *European* Nations, having once established a competent Strength in those Places, which produce the most valuable Slaves, and which they therefore esteem to be of the greatest Consequence to Traffick, thought it *unnecessary*



to erect any Forts, or to make any Settlements elsewhere ; but tho', in *this* respect, we may seem to be upon a *Par* with them, yet, as those Places in which neither of us pretend any Dominion, lie open to the cheapest *Navigation*, and greatest *Force*, our Rivals will always have *this* Advantage of us, that their Ships actually *under-sail* ours, and (being better manned) can command, and intercept our Trade, and that, whether we attempt it by *Land*, or *Water*, being able in the one Case to Spare *larger* Factories, and to send them *further* up the Country, than *we* can do ; and in the other, to over-awe the *Natives* from coming off to us in their *Canoes* ; all which they *have* done, and *can* do, without committing one Act of Hostility against *us*, or appearing to violate the *Letter* of any Treaty.

*Thirdly*, It is alledged, That our *Forts*, and *Settlements* do not secure us an *exclusive* Trade.

*THIS* Objection is founded in *Truth*, with regard to the *Dutch*, and *Portuguese*, because we have never thought it our *Interest* to exclude them ; the first being our *Neighbours*, with whom it is necessary to keep up a Friendly Intercourse ; and the others furnishing us with *Gold*, in exchange for *Slaves*, and other *Commodities*, as well of the Manufacture of *Great-Britain*, as of the Produce of *Africa*. But with respect to the *French*, it was but about the Year 1736, (when our *Forts*, and *Settlements* began to be in a declining State) that they attempted to *Trade*, or so much as to *touch* upon *those* Coasts, in which *we* claim a Property ; a Liberty they ought not to be indulged in, as they refuse the like to all *other Europeans* upon the *Gum-Coast*, of which by Virtue of their *Forts*, and *Settlements*, they claim the *sole* Dominion. The *Dutch* likewise, tho' for their *own* Convenience they allow us to Traffick with *themselves*, will by no Means suffer us to Trade with the *Portuguese*, within reach either of their *Forts*, or of their Cruisers, except at *Whidah*, which being possessed by *different European* Nations, is the only *neutral* Place upon the *Coast*.

If what the *Creditors* have thus *briefly* offered in answer to the *Objections* (and they are not aware of any *other*) shall be thought *Satisfactory*, and *Conclusive*, they presume to hope, that the intrinsic *Value* of the said *Forts*, and *Settlements*, will be allowed to bear a *reasonable* Proportion to the Importance of the *Trade*, which, upon that Supposition, is *supported*, or at least, greatly *benefited* by them ; and, in that Case, they conceive the said *Value* will, by all Persons acquainted with *Commerce*, be understood, and agreed to be much *more* than sufficient to answer the *Creditors* Demands ; nor do they apprehend that the said *Forts*, and *Settlements* can be valued at less, even by those who think them of no further use than as mere *Marks* of Possession.

So likewise, if the *Estimate* of the said *Forts*, and *Settlements*, be taken from what it has cost to erect, support, and preserve them, their *Value* must, undoubtedly, amount to a *prodigious* Sum ; but, as it is in the *Company's* Power alone to make out that amount by an *exact* Calculation, and the *Creditors* do not think it necessary for *their* Purpose to go so far, they will content themselves with what the *Company* have averred in their Petition, and which they must therefore be supposed able to prove, viz. That *their Debt*, amounting to about 100,000*l.* has arose from the *Expence* of supporting their said Possessions.

*Lastly*, If the *Estimate* of the said *Forts*, and *Settlements* might be formed from the *Value*, which *other* Nations set upon their *own*, and may therefore be presumed willing to give for *ours*, in Case the *Company* were permitted to dispose of them to *Foreigners*, the *Value* of the *Company's* Possessions, which are very *numerous*, and of *large* Extent, will by the two following Instances appear to be *immense*.

IN 1713, The King of *Prussia* demanded of the Lords of *Trade*, and *Plantations*, for a Fort at Cape Threepoints, with a couple of small Redouts, which he proposed to sell us, no less than 200,000 Crowns, being about 50,000*l.* Sterling : And in the Year 1718, the *French Senegal Company* actually sold a small Fort in the River *Senegal*, and one in the Island of *Goree*, to a new *French Company*, for 1,600,000 Livres, amounting to about 80,000*l.* Sterling.

Upon the Whole, the *Creditors* having thus claimed the *Company's Possessions*, as a Security for their Demands, and having (as they presume to hope) proved the *Value* of the one, to be more than equivalent to the other, most humbly submit their Case to the Judgment of Parliament, in full Confidence that in what Shape soever the publick Wisdom shall think it necessary to dispose of the said *Forts*, and *Settlements*, all due Regard will be had to private Property, and all possible Tendernefs be shewn to the just Claims of injured Creditors.



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